

## Opening Speech

Dear friends in Red Cross/Red Crescent Youth,  
Cher amis ne la Croix Rouge et la Croissant Rouge de la Jeunesse,  
Queridos amigos de la Cruz Roja y la Media Luna Roja Juventud,

On behalf of Barbara, Nino, Dede, Gerard and me, members of European Coordination Committee 2008-2010, it is a honor to greet all of you. A special thanks to the Austrian Red Cross and to the Austrian Red Cross Youth, which are hosting us, to International Committee of Red Cross and International Federation of RC/RC Societies. They will tell some words at the end of this speech. Also thanks to the Youth Commission member and the youth officer of and Centre of Cooperation in the Mediterranean.

International cooperation among Youth is really important. European Cooperation Meeting is this pan-European event, which has been going strong since 1992. Thanks events like this, everybody of us can improve the quality of his action. We, as European Youth Network, need to stimulate the exchange of experiences and ideas, to share a common view on various sorts of vulnerability, and to improve the wide involvement of youth within the Red Cross.

In our countries, in our towns, while we are having this meeting, youth RC/RC members are helping vulnerable people. According to the Principle of Humanity, this is our mission.

This is the mission today, this was the Idea yesterday. Henri Dunant was 31 years old when he thought that men are all the same, and that it's necessary to take care of all, without any discrimination. This Idea is really actual! Today, all over Europe, we see new forms of suffering, new poverty in our countries. We should act. We have to change ourselves and act! We are more than sixty among youth presidents, youth directors or involved on the board. It's up to us!

We can reach the point, because youth is (not only) the future: youth is the present. We can play a key role, now, for every National Society, also to test new way to help vulnerable people.

Lots of challenges are waiting for us. This meeting will give the opportunity to deal with them. Discussing about European Conference topics, using Strategy 2020 as a tool, working in climate change, learning that migrants, especially illegal ones, are vulnerable twice, being part in ERNA network, cooperate more and more with the Middle East North Africa Youth Network. And, especially, continue to act with the Solferino 2009 spirit, and do more, do better, reach further.

When Dunant said to help also the soldiers of the enemy, whose life was less than nothing, he was thinking to an organization which could defend the healthy, to



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members who could combat discrimination and protect those who have no protection, to people who could act and improve our communities but also who can be friends with members of foreign countries and intervene where necessary, as components of a great Movement.

This is another important reason to be here: the friendship among RC/RC Youth members. At the end of the meeting, everybody of us will have new friends in other countries.

Please do not hesitate to contact ECC members for any information or necessity. Enjoy yourself and have a nice meeting.

Welcome!  
Benvenue!  
Benvenidos!  
Willkommen!  
Dobropojalovat!

Rosario Valastro  
ECC member 2008-2010

